

CLAIMS

Start 1.

A wheel end assembly comprising:

a spindle defining an axis of rotation;

a first wheel hub supported on said spindle by at least one first bearing member for rotation about said axis;

a second wheel hub supported on said spindle adjacent to said first wheel hub by at least one second bearing member for rotation about said axis; and

at least one third bearing member mounted between said first and second wheel hubs to permit said first and second wheel hubs to rotate independently from each other.

2. An assembly as set forth in claim 1 including a fastener mounted on one end of said spindle to prevent linear movement of said first and second wheel hubs along said axis.

3. An assembly as set forth in claim 1 wherein said at least one first bearing member is a single bearing and said at least one second bearing member is a single bearing.

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4. An assembly as set forth in claim 1 including a third wheel hub positioned on an opposite side of said second wheel hub from said first wheel hub for rotation about said axis and including at least one fourth bearing member for allowing said third and second wheel hubs to rotate independently from each other wherein said third bearing member is mounted between said first and second wheel hubs and said fourth bearing member is mounted between said second and third wheel hubs.

5. An assembly as set forth in claim 4 wherein said at least one third bearing member is solely supported between said first and second wheel hubs to permit said first and second wheel hubs to rotate independently from each other under and wherein said at least one fourth bearing member is solely supported between said second and third wheel hubs.

6. An assembly as set forth in claim 1 wherein said at least one third bearing member is a bushing that can support bi-directional axial and radial loads.

7. An assembly as set forth in claim 6 wherein said bushing is a bronze bushing.

8. An assembly as set forth in claim 6 wherein said bushing is a nylon-coated steel bushing.

9. An assembly as set forth in claim 1 wherein said at least one third bearing member is solely supported between said first and second wheel hubs to permit said first and second wheel hubs to rotate independently from each other under predetermined conditions.

10. An assembly as set forth in claim 1 wherein said at least one third bearing member is a radial four-point-contact ball bearing.

11. An assembly as set forth in claim 1 wherein said at least one third bearing member is a double-row angular-contact ball bearing.

12. An assembly as set forth in claim 1 wherein said at least one third bearing is a double-row taper roller bearing.

13. A wheel end assembly comprising:
- a spindle defining an axis of rotation;
 - a first wheel hub supported on said spindle by a first bearing member for rotation about said axis;
 - a second wheel hub supported on said spindle for rotation about said axis by a second bearing member spaced apart from said first bearing member;
 - a third bearing member solely supported between said first and second wheel hubs to permit said first and second wheel hubs to rotate independently from each other under predetermined conditions; and
 - at least one fastening element for retaining said first and second wheel hubs on said spindle to prevent linear movement of said hubs along said axis.
14. An assembly as set forth in claim 13 wherein said third bearing member is positioned between said first and second bearing members.
15. An assembly as set forth in claim 13 wherein said third bearing member is located at a greater radial distance away from said axis than said first or second bearing members.

16. An assembly as set forth in claim 13 wherein said second wheel hub is comprised of an inner hub member and an outer hub member wherein said outer hub member is supported on said spindle via said second bearing member and said third bearing member is solely supported between said first wheel hub and said inner hub member and including a fourth bearing member solely supported between said inner hub member and said outer hub member such that said first wheel hub and said inner hub member can rotate independently from one another and said inner and outer hub members can rotate independently from one another.

17. An assembly as set forth in claim 16 wherein said inner bearing member is solely supported by said third and fourth bearing members for rotation about said axis.